

SOURCES OF LOVE AND HATE

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with, or rather identical with, the problem of sexual attraction generally. The facts are undoubted. The *Zeitschrift fur Psychoanalytische Pddagogik*, III, i, quotes some instances supplied by Abraham, and these can be multiplied by everyone in touch with parents of sufficient frankness and by every child-analyst. Guided by the extraordinarily transparent 'primal scene' play of little children, let us try to understand the effect on the child of such libidinal situations. They are, of course, in their lesser degrees inevitable, but we can best understand the lesser by taking the most extreme, the primal scene, as the classical example and placing it well within the first year.

" The child becomes aware that something is happening in the parents' bed, a something so utterly unfamiliar, so foreign to its experience of its parents that it cannot by any means grasp the meaning of it. Try as it may to understand in terms of its own libidinal experience it feels despairingly that it does not and cannot. It cannot grapple with the problem. . . . Yet neither can the child remain untouched by the problem as with many other events in its small life beyond its power to grasp. For here it is drawn into the magic circle, it is directly involved ; it is aware of a very tense and direct erotic stimulation which has remarkably little to do with the extent of direct observation, whatever the importance of this for the child's phantasies. There are hints that in this direct answer of libido to libido we have a stimulation of genital sensation to a degree unbearable to the little being. And yet at this moment when the undeveloped ego has to cope with a highly stimulated libido, it is in a state of the most complete deprivation. Not only does the mother not come to give it any satisfaction, not only

is it clear that she is absorbed in giving this satisfaction to a rival and a big one at that, but the parents themselves are completely changed—they are no longer ego parents, but at the very moment when the undeveloped ego is feeling the intolerable strain of libido at its highest tensions, they themselves, the essential supports, are 'libido'. Far from helping the baby's ego, they continue to stimulate the enemy libido, and therefore have become doubly enemies themselves. Something approaching this is, I am convinced, the feeling of the child in such and kindred scenes. It reaches, perhaps, its greatest intensity when the scene coincides with some oral